

# KU·BISRING

Brucellish K. Sangma

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# **KU·BISRING**

**Brucellish K. Sangma**

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## TALATCHENGANI

**R**uuta bilsirangonin anga samtangtango ong-enggipa obostaranchi su-dikako man-e, an-tangni chanchianirangko aro gisikni-ka-tongni re-anirangko poedoni bimango parakna skachim. Indiba ia skaniko biteo nakatatna ruute somoe nangaha. Kam tang-ruræ biap jitmitingrango donsret ra-sret dake, mitam seanirangko bingbrangataha. Iano da-o ming kolgrik poedorangko chappa ka-atenga. Mitam poedorangko A-chikkuo see, uarangko Englishona pe-skaaha; Englisho segiparangkoara A-chikkuona pe-skaaha. Indake iano A-chikkuo segipa poedoni ja-mantap, ua apsan poedokon Englisho dona. Indake namama namjawama ine sing-rame nion, namaigen ine ku-pattigiparang dongani gimin anga ia sulsul donani bewalkon ja-rikaha. Poedoni ja-pang katta, riting, poedoo jakkalgipa kattarang, miksongani, ma-rapatani aro uarang gitako ku-gipino donskaon, on-tisa dingtangatanirang ba jujaanirang dongaia. Ku-gipinni katta tong dakani, katta sulsul donani, songsarni jakkalani bewal, ma-gapa kattako man-ani aro uarang gitani a-sel indake ong-a. Indake ong-on ritingni ning-tuani, katta jakkalani aro miksonganiko basakobade jaktuate, engtoaninasa mikpakma nia.

Poedorangko semitingo anga riting bang-a bang-ja, podprakni ro-a ro-ja, ritingprako katta tongrang apsana apsanja aro ma-rapani rokom bidingrangko olgroke ra-e, poedoni bibimna mikpakma niaha.

Poedoni katta bichongrang gisiko nabaa gitasan ong-oba, mitamrangko uitelen ra-aha. "Damsan" poedoko anga Meghalayani mongsongbatgipa jat ma-gnini gisepo ma-sisretanirangni a-sel meligrikjabatmiting somoeo seaha. "Aman' Janggi Silchi" aro "Manden' Bichal" poedorang angni ma-gipani janggi tanganio nangchapchong-motgiparang ong-a. Gisiko neng-nikanirang aro chanchina nangja ine uieba chanchianirangko a-rikgalchengna skanirang biljimachim. Ia poedorangko see parakachi ia kachaoni jokgenkon ine ka-dongani nakata.

“Ku·bisring”- na Agansoaniko sena Tura NEHU Campus Garo Departmentni Skotong Ma (Dr.) Caroline R. Marakko mol·molon ua jechakgijan ra·chakaha. Uko mittelpilaniko iano on·na anga kusi ong·bea. Jakgitchajabeoba ia Agansoaniko see angna didiataniko on·anina, Dr. Marak, nang·ko mittelbea.

Nehru A·ding, Tura.

**Brucellish K. Sangma**

## PREFACE

Having been a witness to all the happenings in today's world, the urge to express my thoughts and feelings in whatever form I could has been there since long. Translating it into reality, however, took its own time, finally resulting in "Ku-bisring." During the course of several job-transfers, some poems written much earlier had been mislaid. This volume carries 20 poems.

Some of the poems were written in Garo and some in English. The poems written in Garo have been rendered into English and those in English into Garo. Both the sets are being published, each poem in Garo immediately followed by that in English. When I broached the subject of this sort of arrangement, I received encouragement from several well-wishers to go ahead. The title, content, lyrics, metre, number of lines as well as syllables in a line, rhyming pattern and such aspects of poetic compositions undergo subtle changes or modifications when a poem written in one language gets translated into another. Slight variations do occur, with convenience on the fore. In this volume also, liberty has thus been exercised to a considerable extent.

Even though most of the themes are natural mental projections, some have been consciously chosen. The Poem "Together" was conceived at the time when palpable tension arose between the two major tribes of Meghalaya. "My Mother's Soul" and "The Court of Man" are based on actual incidents and autobiographical in nature. The need to exorcise the emotional stress and never should-have been-feelings was tremendously felt and they clamoured for release. By publishing this book of poems, I expect and hope to drive out the demons for good.

I feel privileged to place on record my deep gratitude to Dr. (Mrs.) Caroline R. Marak, Professor and Head, Department of Garo, NEHU, Tura Campus, for the Foreword for "Ku-bisring." Thank you, Dr. Marak, for your unstinted encouragement.

Nehru A-ding, Tura

**Brucellish K. Sangma**

## AGANSOANI

*J*a “Ku-bisring” chapdilmongo Ma Brucellish K. Sangma 1975-  
oni 2002 -ona segipa poedorangko gatatenga, jerangkon  
A-chikku aro Englishchi seaha. Englishchi sechenggipa  
poedorangko ua A-chikku pe-aha; indake A-chikkuchi  
sechenggiparangkoba ua Englishchi pe-aha, jedake an-chingni  
Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagoreba an-tangni bang-a  
poedorangko an-tangan Englishoba donaha. Namen pe-ahani gimin  
badiarangko Englishchi, badiarangko A-chikkuchi sechengaha uina  
neng-a.

Uni poedorang chanchiao aro idearango a-bachenga. Poedo  
mingantini ja-pang-ja-dilko aro themeni gimin ua seaha; ua  
parakanirang poraigiparangko jakkindilgen. Poedo mingprakan  
maini gimin ong-a uina dakchakgen, jekai ‘Ang’ Ripengni Katta’,  
‘Anga Bebera-a’, ‘Gunni Gopram’ aro ‘Gitelni Boja’. Iarangko poet  
an-tangan seahani gimin maming uisretani dongna nangjaha;  
uarang poedorangko ma-sibatatna dakchakani ong-gen. Uni  
an-tangni poedoni gimin seaniara T.S. Eliotni theory gita ong-a,  
jean ua poet an-tangan an-tangni seani gimin aganode nama ine  
agana; maina banaimitingo tarina sapani aro am-rikkitna sapani  
minggnian damsan kam ka-a. Eliotni nikanio poet an-tangsa maikai  
poedo mingsako sena gisik nabaa, maikai banaiaha, mairangko  
donbrine gipinrangko galaha, badiarangko baseaha, uarangko  
uibata.

Ia chapdilmongko an-chingni sea-jotani traditiono chapatenga;  
gital seanirangko on-dapon ua traditionko on-tisa dingtangata.  
“Tradition and Individual Talent”-o T.S. Eliot agana, saksani  
seajotaniara tradition baksa nangrimgrikani gnang; maina uaba  
chengonin uni chasongona kingking mingbagipa seabagipa  
poedorang una banaiani ramako mesoka. Uni nambatgipa  
seanirango batanggimin poetrangni kamkoba nika.  
Pagitchamrangni chasongni chasongna banaie, skirikrike,  
knarikrike donangginin traditional/ oral literature gnang, jeni  
gamchatako A-chikrang an-tangtangan chu-gimik ma-sikuja.



An-chingni epic poedo Katta Doka-ko songresonggabatao, antidamo, ma-drang- mahari tom-ao minga; Dani, Doro aro Ajeako Wangala somoeo jakkala; Kabeko sio-bon-o aro mangonao minga; una agreba krita-amuarango minganirangba gnang. Indagkiparangan an-chingni man-rikani ong-a, jekai knatimrikrike indita bakroa ba kan-dika poedorangko gisiko chipe, chengoni da-alona kingking ripingbaaha.

Gipin tradition, see banaianiko Ramke W. Momin aro Modhunath G. Momin A-chikrangoni Kristian ong-bae lekka-pora skion a-bachengdilaha, je ramakon Tuniram R. Marak, Karnesh R. Marak, Howard Denison W. Momin aro gipin banaina changbegiparang ja-rikbaaha.

Pagitchamrang uamangni mingao imagery, symbol aro metaphorical ku-sikko jakkala; indakgipa minganirangchi uamang kakketrangko (truths) paraka. Uamangni bebera-ani, chanchiani aro ma-ambiko uarangon nikgen. See banaigipa poedorangoba poet maiko chanchia, maiko aganna ska, mai kakketrangko nika, uarangko basegimin kattarangchi sea. Uamangni katta bichongrangna uamangni rokom jakkala figurerang aro aganmitapanirang ganding gita ong-a.

Indonga man-rikaniko an-chingni poetrang da-alonan jakkalbaenga. Ma. B.K. Sangma indakgipa poedoo nangbegipa figurerangko jakkalaha aro an-tangni diction-naba kattarangko simsake baseaha. A-chikrango D.S. Rongmuthu "Apako Gisik Ra-ani" ki-tapo an-tangni ra-chimonggimin poedorangko chapdilmong dake chappa ka-e rama redilangaha. Ua ramko adita sak re-angaha; ian an-chingna uamangni on-gilani ong-a. Ia chapdilmong "Ku-bisring" A-chik sea-jotana gamchatgipa chapatani ong-a. Ku-sik minggnichi see chappa ka-anio ua skanggipa ong-a.

Ma. B.K. Sangmani jakkala bimang (form) -ko niode, an-tang katta bichongni nangani kri ua an-tangan banaiaha ine nikgen. Uni sea ma-keta aro nangana bate ua kattarangko jakkalja. Uni gimin uni poedoraanga te-rak te-rak, aro ritingrang kan-dikdik. Katta

baseao ua simsaka; uni chanchiani chuani kri kattarangba ong-a. Poedo mingprako unity gnang, maina je chanchia mingsako dingtang dingtang dake nie matchote seaha, jekai “The Tripper”, “My Window Seat”, aro “A Slice of Heaven”. Uarangni bimang aro contentni gisepo nangrimani gnang, aro minggnian melia ma-gapa ine nikna man-a. Jeko aganna ska, una tik kattako jakkale ua chanchiatangko tiktak parakna jotton ka-a.

Uni poedorang moral sing-anirangko sing-a; a-gilsak gimikon pangnajolnan indakgipa sing-anirang gnang. A-sakni pilak manderangna agreba, jattang, chatchitang, pagitcham-ma-gitcham, aro uni ka-sagiminrang uni gisiko donga. Gunrang, bebera-ani, kakket, sronge janggi tangani aro ong-telaigiparangni nitoa aro janggiko ripingani bil uni mongsonggipa nangnikanirang ong-a.

**Caroline R. Marak**

Professor and Head,

Department of Garo

NEHU, TURA CAMPUS

## FOREWORD

This volume of poems called “Ku-bisring” is a unique venture in the history of Garo literature in the sense that all these poems, written between 1975 and 2002 are both in Garo and in English. Those poems which have been originally composed in Garo have been translated into English, and vice versa. The translations have been accomplished so skilfully that a reader is not able to make out which poems have been originally written in A-chikku and which in English.

Mrs. Brucellish K. Sangma’s poems originate in thoughts and ideas; her mode of composition has come a long way from the romantic tradition. The theme and genesis of each poem have been written down by the poet herself in a sort of condensed ‘notes’; these ‘notes’ will guide the readers towards understanding the poems. This mode of presentation appears to be in line with T.S. Eliot’s view that it is often enlightening to have a poet herself comment on her own work, because, in the process of composition, creative as well as critical faculties are at work simultaneously. Some of these poems are “Ang’Ripengni Katta,” “Anga Bebera-a,” “Gunni Gopram” and “Gitelni Boja”, whose origin and meaning have been indicated by the poet herself.

The publication of compositions both in the vernacular and in English is in the tradition of Rabindranath Tagore; the two versions are like the two facets of the same coin. It may be assumed that looking at the same composition from two different aspects will lead to a greater understanding of the true meaning of a poem.

This also leaves us with no room for ambiguity and misinterpretation, for the poet herself has taken a step towards elucidation and commentation on her own works.

This unique contribution is being added to our literature; it is set to become a part of our tradition, which is constantly being “modified by the introduction of the new (really new) work of art

among them.” T.S. Eliot in his “Tradition and Individual Talent” has spelt out the relationship between tradition and an author, how an individual derives his bearings from tradition.

It is true that our written literature is only slightly more than a century old, having started with our pioneers like Ramke W. Momin and the American Baptist Missionaries. As we see in the record, in the domain of written composition, it appears that Ramke W. Momin and Modhunath G. Momin led the way, which has been followed by other gifted poets like Tuniram R. Marak, Howard Denison W. Momin, Karnesh R. Marak and so on.

Older, and directly coming from our forefathers are our literature, whose importance has not been fully realized even among the A-chiks themselves. Dani, Doro, Ajea, Kabe, Katta Doka, incantations and chants form a part of the great body of traditional poetry. Passed on orally, these poems contain the thought and history of our ancestors, our past. Through them, the style and language of our forefathers have been preserved for posterity. They form our true heritage, and are an inalienable part of our tradition.

It is this body of literature which has gone into the making of our present poets. Like our forefathers, Mrs. B.K. Sangma has used the important ingredients of poetic composition, viz, imagery, symbol and metaphorical language. This tradition of using figurative language and diction may be seen to continue in our written poetry, however tenuous; they clothe their themes and form the chief means of communication to the readers.

Mrs. B.K. Sangma has derived forms to suit each thought, achieving a fusion of form and content which receives much emphasis in English poetry. Her style is concise and pruned of any redundancy. In A-chikku as well as in English, she has carefully selected her language, with an aim to be accurate and precise as far as possible. There is a unity of design in every poem, where themes are developed to her satisfaction, as may be seen in “The Tripper”, “My Window Seat” and “A Slice of Heaven”. Her diction is a perfect match to the loftiness of thought, whose importance

need hardly be emphasized. The poems are a result of sincere labour; on close examination each line and stanza will be seen to have been carefully constructed. In some poems, as in “The Burial Ground For Values”, she has located a situation through the image of the graveyard of virtues in order to convey her dismay at the loss of values.

One of the characteristics of her poetry still needs mentioning; she asks moral questions. These questions may be regarded as open-ended, if a reader so chooses. The questions are of universal significance which any responsible person may ask. Her concerns are her own society, besides the humanity at large, her relatives and friends and ancestors, and her loved ones. Her preferences are also clear : virtue and other qualities, faith, an upright life, and not the last among them is the beauty and sustaining power of Nature.

**Caroline R. Marak**

Professor and Head,

Department of Garo

NEHU, TURA CAMPUS

# KATTA BICHONGRANG

## CONTENTS

1.	Anga Bebera-a.....	2
	I Believe.....	3
2.	Ang' Ripengni Katta.....	4
	The Story of My Friend.....	5
3.	Gitelni Boja.....	6
	The Lord's Burden.....	7
4.	Challang.....	8
	The Hero.....	9
5.	Gunni Gopram.....	10
	The Burial Ground for Values.....	12
6.	Aman' Janggi Silchi.....	14
	My Mother's Soul.....	15
7.	Manden' Bichal.....	16
	The Court of Man.....	18
8.	Sing-ani.....	20
	The Query.....	21
9.	Damsan.....	22
	Together.....	24
10.	Miksilchi.....	26
	A Pair of Spectacles.....	27
11.	Balkol.....	28
	The Abode of Wind-God.....	29

---

12.	Rong Gri Mande.....	30
	The Man With No Colours.....	32
13.	An·chin' A·sal.....	34
	The Manure of Blood.....	35
14.	Pattia Isolde.....	36
	The Lord Blesses.....	37
15.	Duk Mikchin' Bil.....	38
	The Power of Tragedy.....	39
16.	Songregipa.....	40
	The Tripper.....	42
17.	Ang' Kelkisamo.....	44
	My Window Seat.....	46
18.	Salgi Chil·engsa.....	48
	A Slice of Heaven.....	50
19.	Ripengrangna Salam.....	52
	Tribute to Friends.....	53
20.	Simteka Gri Gitrang.....	54
	Songs of Innocence.....	56





*On·kanga ang'dedrangna,  
Cherie, Re·nang, Balsri aro Te·nangna.*

*Dedicated to my children,  
Cherie, Re·nang, Balsri and Te·nang.*

## Anga Bebera·a

Godooode rong·te, bebera·a anga,  
Man·gen salgiko napongatna,  
Sa·grerang kal·grikako nie dongna.

Bebera·a anga, man·gen chubee bilna,  
So·ombit aramko dangtapna,  
Askirangko rim·roke nina.

Bebera·a anga, man·gen chining napna,  
Sagal tu·bearangona,  
Na·tok nokmaming jropana.

Anga bebera·a, man·gen a·ning bitna,  
Gamchata ro·ongrangko kolna,  
Uarangchi an·tangko nitoatna.

Bebera·a anga, man·gen dakna bang·ako,  
Mande·sa·grerangni duulao,  
A·sak gamrangni bijangchio.

Watja indiba pangkime bebera·ako,  
Dakchengna nanga kamtangko,  
Rang·site jajumanggipa a·damtango.

(2002)

# **I Believe**

I believe if a pebble is thrown upwards  
I can pierce the heavens  
And see the angels at play.

I believe I can soar to the heights  
Touch the silky clouds  
And feel the stars.

I believe I can dive  
Right into the depths  
And swim with the sharks.

I believe I can claw into the earth's belly,  
Pick up the priceless gems  
And adorn myself with them.

I believe I can do many things  
Amidst the human-angels  
Surrounded by the world's treasures.

But I firmly believe, I've to complete  
The role assigned to me here  
Where I dream and breathe.

*(2002)*

## Ang' Ripengni Katta

Ong·ja iarang  
Kattarang angni;  
Ku·ba rang·basa  
Ang' ripeng saksani.

Jripjrang chi·indiko  
Okamaha Un' bimingko,  
Sikdik ka·beaoni  
Setang siaoni.  
Aganchakjaha Ua:  
Indiba do·buring  
Knatobee ring·ataha.  
Unon uni ka·tong  
Man·aha ka·dimeani,  
Gisik ritchengani.  
Am·aha ua buringo  
Uni mikkangko,  
Roramachim jeo  
Batanggimin somoeo.  
Uoni dongnuaha Ua.  
Indiba nikaha ina:  
Boldambe tangsekko  
Sal teng·chakao,  
Bibal ka·dingsmitako  
Nie uchipakko.  
Indakesa re·baa Ua,  
Sulni knatoanio,  
Nitoa manchokanio,  
Bol ritimanio.  
Mandea sawa  
Un' nikanio,  
Jotton ka·pana  
Parakna, ku·pretna,  
Dongnugipa bilko  
Un' aiao inmananiko!

(1995)

# **The Story of My Friend**

These are  
Not my words,  
But those voiced  
By my friend.

In the quiet solitude  
She called out His name  
In the bitterness of heart  
After her spouse's death.  
He kept His silence.  
But a sweet song  
Came from a wild bird.  
Then to her heart  
There came solace  
The lightness of mind.  
She looked for His face  
In the forest glades,  
Where she roamed with him  
In the days gone by.  
He hid Himself from her.  
But this she saw:  
A tree still tender  
Glinting in sunlight;  
Flowers smiling  
Softly at her.  
He reveals Himself thus:  
In the sweetness of a tune  
In the beauty of a bud  
In the tenderness of a tree.  
She, a human being,  
Felt small under His gaze,  
To try to understand  
His hidden power  
His awesome grandeur.

(1995)

## Gitelni Bja

Skangoba arara, ong-angkugen arara,  
Ia an-ching a-gilsakara.  
Gitelan bimang on-e, gapataha uko rongchi,  
Nitoataha uko, do-o mat aro bibalchi.  
Indiba mande?  
An-chio auataha uade,  
Ia a-sakko,  
Gitelni ong-atgiminko;  
An-chitang ong-ja, an-chisa jawani,  
Chansokgija manderangna on-gipa janggi.  
Kningjok a-gilsak a-dimuona,  
Rongrang dimeljok, cham-angjok jringjrotna.  
Do-o mat darangan ku-jripjok,  
Tengtogipan ka-speao jrongangjok.  
Gitel nione, nikjok maiko?  
Niktaijok ua ararako.  
Be-eno arara, gisiko bangbang,  
Namdap-sildapani gri uarang.  
Namdapa oe, cha-ao ringao  
Dingtanga bebe, rikrak ching-chipao;  
A-gao re-anio, sako bilanio,  
Aroba jengbong suakao.  
Iaba ong-a nambat-chubatani,  
Indiba gri uano gun janggini.  
Mejekjajok bebe, do-ode matde,  
Indiba sul dongkua manden' ma-ringaode,  
Nanggen kakketko an-ching ku-chakna.  
Aganna nangja, rong dongja:  
Donga rong, gitchakrai an-chio  
Dos gri mandeni janggi chotao.  
Indakesa Gitel, nangengkua chilna  
Manden' papni bojako, da-alona.

(1975)

## **The Lord's Burden**

The void that was, and the void to be  
This world of ours.  
The Lord gave it shape and splashed it with colours,  
Adorned it with living creatures and flowers.  
But man?  
Man bathed it in crimson blood  
This world of ours,  
This creation of the Lord.  
Blood not his own, but that of others,  
The life-giving fluid of the countless millions.  
The world lay in shambles  
The colours faded, gone for ever.  
Melted in the sighs of the suffering,  
Silencing the voice of creation.  
The Lord looks down and sees what?  
Nothing but emptiness and the void.  
Emptiness in body, emptiness in mind,  
No revamping of any kind.  
Change, yes, in the spread on the table,  
In the jingle and glitter of the bauble;  
In man's conquest of land and space  
And also in the overflowing money-bags.  
A sort of development, no doubt,  
But with no essence of life for men.  
Silenced is the voice of the living  
But the tune continues in the croak of the dying.  
You cannot say colours are nonexistent.  
One will have to bow to the truth.  
There are colours, but of the blood,  
From the lifeless body of the innocent.  
Thus the Lord continues to be the tray  
For the burden of man's sins, till today.

(1975)

## **Challang**

Bitgipa gisik a-ning  
Sea poedo riting:  
Katta ma-rap minggipa  
Gisik bitskagipa.

Gisik a-ning bitani  
Poedo sena changani;  
Nika saksa mandeo  
Brin bawe guno.

Katta kakket ong-ani  
Kakket bichal dongani;  
Nika uni poedoo,  
Gisik a-ning bitao.

Bikpilgrik bewalrang  
Dingtanggrik cholonrang,  
Challang manden' gunde,  
Dongaia brin bawe.

(1989)



# **The Hero**

Verses from the pen  
Of the Scientist;  
Scientific temper  
In the Poet.

Knowledge in science,  
Flair for Verses  
In the same being  
Smoothly coexist.

Precision of words  
Portrait of justice  
Visible in verses  
In scientific exercises.

Opposite trends  
Diverse talents  
All go to make  
A complete Man.

*(1989)*

## **Gunni Gopram**

Re-roroe jumango,  
A·bri a·kaweo,  
Sokjok anga gopramdam  
Chisol gisim songdoram.

Nina sikjok gisiko  
Mai ong-manchaako,  
Ong-ronggija dakako  
Gopram a·dapgijako.

Donja mang' bakosko,  
Gopram ning-ao;  
Dontoka kolkumango  
A·kol cho·a damprako.

Kodal gitichi ga·bate  
A·mang a·ki ma·bake,  
Nijok bakosantiko,  
Gale gisik kenako.

Skanggipa bakoso  
Manden Nangrimaniko  
Dona ba·ra remreme,  
Gisimao tuate.

Nautaijok gipinko,  
Nikjok Ka·saaniko,  
Ampaltak grinao  
Ku·gri mikgri tuako.

Oprakjok ge·gipinko  
Chadikjok Kakketaniko,  
Uijajok an·simanan  
Mikkang dimelanan.

Kakket Bichalani  
Nidojok bakosoni,  
Birong gri mikkolchi  
Rang·site balwa gri.

Kolqipino biginchi  
A·sak Tom·tomani;  
Gren·g ja·tong tong·gakjok,  
Biritchu ma·atjajok.

Sambao dona bakoso,  
Nikjok anga niono,  
Manden' Ka·sachakani,  
Nidoari wakengsi.

Dongenga bakosrangde,  
A·samo dre dre,  
Ge·antikon opraka  
Ba·ra marang paksepa.

Bakos gital sokana,  
Katna an·piloara,  
Nikjok do·gao seako,  
“Gunni Gopram” inako.

Nikjok anga niwilwale  
Tuaoni mikrake,  
Ong·bebejok a·gilsaka  
Gunni Gopramsa.

(1995)

## **The Burial Ground for Values**

Strolling in my dream  
Over hills and dales,  
I chance upon a graveyard  
With crosses painted black.

An intense desire arises  
To dig at the truth,  
Beyond rare occurrence,  
The scene of open graves.

The coffins there  
Not on intended beds;  
Each finds a place  
Only at the edge.

Evading the spades  
Feet with graveyard soil,  
Into each coffin I peep  
Leaving the fear aside.

In the first coffin  
I see Man's Unity,  
Wrapped in cerements  
Lying in darkness.

Looking into another  
Love I see;  
Voiceless, sightless,  
On a tattered mat.

Opening another box  
Truth I encounter;  
Faceless with dark skin  
And visage altered.

From another coffin  
Looks up Justice,  
With empty sockets  
And futile breath.

In another are the pieces  
Of World Peace;  
Limbs torn asunder  
Joints all jumbled.

On looking down  
Into the adjacent box  
Sympathy, I see, staring up  
In toothless grin.

Many more coffins  
Arranged in rows;  
Each lies uncovered,  
With a wedge of shroud.

On a fresh arrival  
Turning to get away,  
I see written on the gate  
"The Burial Ground for Values."

I look around  
On waking up,  
To see my world  
The Burial Ground for Values.

(1995)

## Aman' Janggi Silchi

Salgin' teng·ao dongama  
Ama nang' janggi?  
Balwan' ku·rangoma,  
Nang' silchi?  
Salgin' jahas bildojok salgichi  
Ra·dojokkon aman' janggi-silchi.

Balwan' moengo,  
Saljagring kan·diko,  
Ku·rang chel·anga  
Un baksa re·anga,  
Aman' bimanga.

Bilona salgin' jahas  
Pu·galna ning·niko  
Dondika balwaba  
Cheng·atna baltangko.  
Pil·baama aman' janggi  
Dongnuachimma nang' silchi?

Pil·bajok jakari,  
Done bilsokgijachi,  
Bimangko galangjok,  
Be·en a·pilangjok,  
Jagring gimaangjok.

Jawan galchipao bon·oba,  
Saksan dongao mikchipoba,  
Donga nang' janggi  
Man·e tom·tomani.  
Tipja ka·dongani  
Nang' dedrangni.

(1977)

## **My Mother's Soul**

Mother, is your soul  
In the dazzling light?  
Or in the voice of the wind  
Is your spirit?  
The divine chariot has flown up  
With your soul.

As the winds move  
As shadows shorten  
The voice fades away  
Accompanied by  
Mother's form.

The chariot returns  
Its cargo offloaded  
As the wind pauses  
To lighten its load.  
Does mother's soul return  
Stowed in the hold?

Empty on return trip  
The soul beyond the wings  
The body in wait  
To return to dust  
The shadow to exit.

The end in desertion  
The final sleep in solitude.  
Your soul lives  
In eternal peace,  
In ceaseless hope  
Of your offspring.

(1977)

## **Manden' Bichal**

Man·ama mandea  
Mandeko bichalna,  
Nolona rimnapna,  
A·palchi galatna?  
Donama bikoan  
Boksisko chamnaba  
Den·sotna kimitna  
Bilba bininma?

Nolona rimnapna  
Bilko man·gipa,  
Nolona nappilna  
Man·gijagipa,  
Champenga pakmachi  
Gugraa jaksichi  
Dongja dongpengani  
Maming dingtangani.

Amama mandea  
Mandeko bichalna,  
Nie a·palnirangko  
Namja inna?  
Nija an·chingde  
Bilbangko an·tangni  
Niksenga papde  
Jawani, noksulni.

A·sakni gamna bilna,  
Osoa salgin' do·gaba;  
Randina segrina  
An·pila sa·greba.  
Altua gamni nokgipa  
On·soa nolo nappilna  
Sigimin segrina  
Bi·chakna jechaka.



Mandea man·ama  
Mandeko bichalna  
Man·ama ra·rikna  
Jakkalna niamko?  
Jegalna dakjena  
Isolni bilko,  
Seama gitalko  
Mosea niamko?

Nolni ning·oni,  
Nolni a·palni,  
Badia gamchata  
Bakosa jegala?  
Sawasa bichalgen  
Mitema mandema  
Sawasa talatgen  
Janggia sanisa?

(1977)

## **The Court of Man**

Can a man judge  
Another man  
Her to enfold  
Her to cast off.  
Is he ordained  
To dole out rewards.  
Has he the power  
To snuff out, to sever.

One with power  
To call in the flock  
The other one barred  
From entering the fold.  
A flimsy wall between  
Under the sway of a finger.  
Bereft of illusion,  
With no distinction.

Can a man judge  
Another man  
Probe the shell  
And her condemn?  
We pretend not to see  
The beam in own eye.  
Glaring to man  
Are sins of others.

Power and riches  
Open heav'ns portals  
For the destitute widows  
Turn away the angels.  
For the rich and the mighty  
Entry to the fold is easy  
For the widow dead  
Prayers are denied.

Can a man judge  
Another man  
Flaunt the procedures  
Apply the second rules.  
To rebut and spurn  
God's own power  
Did Moses frame  
Another set of rules?

Within the fold,  
Outside the fold;  
Which of worth  
Which is dross?  
Who will judge  
Man or God?  
Who'll explain  
Whose is the soul?

(1977)

## Sing·ani

An·chian chatbata,  
Pagitcham agana,  
Bate china.  
Sakkia bao?  
Uamang ina-  
Altubea,  
Chaaibo gitokna.

Chasong gital  
Jeraa  
An·chide chatbatja.  
Katta bebema?  
Niaibo pa·ode  
Jawan an·chide  
Jokaia altubee.

Chatchi mahari  
Noa abi  
Kabinggrikani.  
Ortoa maiasa?  
Chasong gitcham kattako  
Ina da·bebera·bo,  
Jitpakgalataibo.

An·chia dam chatja,  
Ka·sagrikani dongja,  
Bebera·gen anga.  
Indiba sawa talatgen,  
Maina sikkima  
Kalima anga  
Ba·rima siana?

(1995)

## The Query

Blood is thicker  
Than water,  
So said the forefathers.  
Where's the proof?  
Their answer:  
Very simple,  
Aim for the jugular

The new generation  
Files contradiction:  
Blood is not thicker.  
Any truth?  
Dare you to watch  
The blood of others  
That freely flows.

The kith and kin  
The siblings  
Close kinship.  
Means what?  
Old wives' tales, they say,  
Not to be trusted,  
Just push them away.

Cheap is the blood,  
Love exists not;  
Am ready to believe.  
But who'll explain,  
Why do I weep  
Why do I mourn  
A sibling's death?

(1995)

## Damsan

Nang atchio,  
Knachenga nang' grapako,  
Ang' nachilo.  
Ganchio on-a na-a,  
Napbola man-a anga.

Ang' ku-mejekara  
Nang' ka-dingsmitara  
Jokdima chikolsan.  
Kattara nang-ni  
Ku-pretara angni.

Nang' ku-sa du-chenga,  
Dut tingtotsa ringchenga,  
Ang' jakpaosa.  
Koldoade anga  
Jak moilaade na-a.

Ja-ku de-chengao  
Ang' rama re-chengo  
Na-a jakkindila.  
Angnisa ja-ade,  
Nang-nisa monggotde.

Ang' bo-om mikchirang,  
Jrongata nang' kenarang,  
Su-srange ka-tongrang.  
Chu-sokgijani angni,  
Ka-beani nang-ni.

Dal-droan saknaanirang  
Ang' jajrengarang,  
Nangea nang-o uarang.  
Angnisa saknaani,  
Sa-dika ka-tong nang-ni.

Ka·paa nang' kamko  
Ra·chaka ang' kratcha·ako,  
Ritchenggrikate balko.  
Skie ra·ani nang·ni,  
Man·dapanide angni.

Mitchian jaksi,  
Jotdika nang·chi,  
Ding·ata ang' an·chi.  
Angko ga·tingara,  
Nangea nang' ja·skuosa.

Grongrang soitanni,  
Do·garang salgini,  
Senga bon·ao janggini.  
Seokna saksani,  
Basea sakgni.

Grina ba·ra chippengani  
Gimaanga andalmik guuri,  
Parake kakketko jringjrotni.  
Tangani, unikoa siani,  
Grongdima an·ching sakgni.

Rakbea stitgrikani.  
Manggisi nang·ni,  
Ba·ra marang angni.  
Ge·gni bakosde  
Gopramde kolsanne.

Ning·tue stitgrikani,  
Rasongrang jatgnini,  
Kal·ani miterangni.  
Tangao siao olmak ko·san,  
Oe, an·chingde damsan.

(1990)

# Together

At your birth  
Mine were the ears  
To hear the shrill cry;  
Libation was yours  
But Baptism was mine.

My bubbly gurgle  
And your shrill laughter  
Streamed as one.  
Yours was the word  
But utterance was mine.

Your first morsel  
The first drop of milk  
Served on my palm.  
I did the lifting  
Stained were your fingers.

The tentative step  
On my first walk  
Was steadied by you;  
Mine were the feet,  
The crutch was yours.

My warm tears  
Dissolved your fears  
Cleansing our hearts.  
Mine was the failure  
But bitterness was yours.

My warm tears  
Dissolved your fears  
Cleansing our hearts.  
Mine was the failure  
But bitterness was yours.

My growing pains  
The adolescent doubts  
Were felt by you.  
The hurt was mine,  
The bleeding heart was yours.



Your toil I share  
My shame you bear  
Lightening the burden.  
Experience is yours  
But enrichment is mine.

The finger of hate  
Pointed at you  
Scorches my skin;  
The kick aimed at me  
Falls on your shin.

The devil's horns  
Or the pearly gates  
Await us at life's end;  
One man's choice  
But we choose together.

The veil splits  
The mist lifts  
Baring the eternal truth;  
Life, and then death,  
We face together.

Clinging to each other,  
Your rotting corpse  
And cerements mine;  
Two coffins  
But one grave.

Closely intertwined  
Fates of two tribes,  
Helpless pawns in life's game.  
In life and in death,  
Yes, we are together.

(1990)

## Miksilchi

Okkri cha-asia  
Bi-sa alna tengkia;  
Nikja manden mikronde  
Re-a gele, kata an-pile.  
Namjakon mikronan.

Gangri chingrijok  
Janggil grengrikkok;  
Iachide gana ruprup  
Nikja cholgriko.  
Ganjakon miksilchi.

Kora kempa ma-ama,  
Kelkisamo neua;  
Nia nokma indinsa  
Mikron nikbadeesa.  
Brejakon miksilchi.

Mata an-chiari,  
Salpaka san' gari;  
Peke chalaigipade  
Nikangjajok ukode.  
Ipakjakon miksilchi.

Saa amjae til-tila,  
Ramasamo gitila;  
Somoe dongja mandeo  
Skela bi-na Gitelo.  
Srejakon miksilchi.

Sakchiko nido  
Bojatangko chile,  
A-chikode nikjajok,  
Ja-gitote romromjok.  
Be-jokkon miksilchi.

(1994)

## **A Pair of Spectacles**

An infant cries  
In hunger pains;  
But sees not the man;  
Dodges, retraces steps.  
Defect in the eyes, perhaps.

The tattered rags  
The skeletal frame bare;  
It escapes the eyes  
Of the one in brocades.  
Perhaps, glasses yet to be bought.

The cripple moans,  
Peeps into the chamber;  
The rich man looks  
Eyes focused farther.  
Perhaps, glasses not in place.

One bathed in blood,  
Courtesy someone's car.  
The sozzled drives away,  
Without a backward glance.  
Peprhaps, glasses not yet wiped.

Lies there the palsied,  
Ashiver at the wayside;  
No time to spare  
Need to haste for prayer.  
Perhaps, lens yet to be changed.

Looking upwards  
Carrying own load;  
Unaware of the potholes,  
Trips and falls.  
Broken, maybe, the pair of spectacles.

(1994)

## Balkol

Atchumang agana  
Mite donga,  
Raka miteni  
A-song Kosi.  
Den·nabe bola wa·a  
Balwa miten' dongramsa,  
Sao sarap on·gen  
Chiring chisik tipgen,  
Sabisi man·gen  
Sakonchi baramgen.

Gisik a·ning bitgipa  
Mikchikkime agana:  
Bola wa·a den·ode  
Pil·a a·sak nagande.  
Mikka bitchi ra·rikja  
Chiring chimik nadoja.  
Do·ba matba an·sengja  
Akal karap ong·ana.  
Baka rama mandea  
A-song a·gisichina.

Atchu ambin aganani  
Chengoni bebera·ani,  
Dedaja komija uoni  
Gisik a·ning bitgipaoni.  
Atchu ambin taningba  
Salgi a·sak bawila;  
Umang katta jakkala,  
Talatasa dingtanga;  
Ja·pang katta asolde  
Apsana birongde.

(1992)

## **The Abode of Wind-God**

The forefathers say  
Here the gods do stay;  
Land of powerful deities  
Abode of guardian spirits.  
Taboo to cut the trees  
From the Wind-God's abode.  
Cursed you will be:  
Water sources dry up  
Diseases strike  
And follow epidemics.

Today's scientists  
State solemnly:  
Denude not the forests  
The land turns barren.  
No receptacle for rain  
Rivers and rills cease.  
Joy deserts the earth  
Gives way to famine.  
Man digs his way  
To the desert-land.

The forefathers' words  
The age-old beliefs,  
Show no deviation  
From the scientists' vision.  
The ancient wisdom  
Enfolds the universe.  
Different words  
Diverse ways,  
Sprout from one root  
Reaffirm the truth.

(1992)

## Rong Gri Mande

Chagronga anga saksa mandeko  
Gana china be-en bimang ching-pilgipako,  
Ching-dugaen mikbrappilgipako.  
Dondike knakubo un' kattako  
Ia manden' mikgrini bewalko.

Ia mandea namnika gitchak rongko,  
Ka-namgija mikronrangni,  
Ra-chipilgipa ka-anangani,  
Slai ku-chot wal-sareni,  
Wangbrakgipa matarangni,  
Bisingkap gri parirangni.  
Nikja ua mata-parin' sam an-chiko  
Sal napangenggipani rong gitchakako.

Nika ua rong gisimako  
Norok wal-kun' andalaniko,  
Gimagimin janggirangni wal-kusiako,  
Chasongrangni gal-imak chatpilgiminko.  
Nikja ua rinoka rongrang,  
Bi-sa bakgitchakni simteka giani  
Jajrenga gri me-tran' ka-dingani  
Aro rongtala ka-tongni baljrengani.

Nikja so-oma rongko bibal manchokao,  
Ringsolgital bijakrangni samra tangsekao,  
So-opa rimitchin do-buring grangrango  
Dangtapa gri aramrangni tangsimao,  
Kimkima a-pa un' ja-kokkimao,  
Nangchakani dongja un' mikronrango:  
Simteka gri janggirangni nitoani,  
Kabinga gri jakgitelani katchaani.

Ia rong gri mande  
Tanga rongrangko chippenge  
Diabolni rongrangchi an-tangko sasonate.  
Galna somoe dongkua ching-mika bewalko  
Jenan biap gri, rongrang bijangchio.  
Skie ra-bo bi-achi dingtangatna  
Kabingaoniko rongrangko jakgitelatna  
Tin-kagimin ka-tongko jrongatpilna.

Bi-bo ka-sinjrim tingtotrangna  
Chatgimin wal-kusiko su-sranggalna  
Andalaniko tang-galatna  
Janggitangko ronggrikatna  
Gisik tom-tomaniko man-na.

(2002)

## The Man With no Colours

I met a man, polished and prim;  
In dress and form, so polished  
Harsh light reflected from him.  
Now pause and listen to his story,  
The story of his blind nature.

This man likes the colour red  
The red of bloodshot eyes  
Of hidden anger.  
The red at the tip of the gun,  
Of gaping wounds  
Of open sores.  
He sees not the red of the restorative fluid,  
And of the sun shafting its last light.

He sees the black  
The black in the darkness of hell  
Filled with the blackness of lost souls  
Caked with the soot centuries-old.  
He sees not the soft colours,  
Of the new-born's innocence,  
The ring of a maid's silvery laughter,  
Of the lightness of a heart pure.

He has no eyes for the silkiness of a bud,  
The healing green of tender leaves,  
The feathery yellow on a bird's wings  
The powdery blue of touch-free clouds.  
The firm brown earth under his feet  
Catches not his eyes:  
So do the beauty of innocent lives  
The bliss of unfettered freedom.



This man blind to colours  
Shuts them out from his life  
Thumbed by the devil's hues.  
Still time to shed the polished airs  
No room for it amidst the riot of colours.  
Learn to change it with prayers  
To free the captive from chains  
To thaw the unyielding heart.

Pray for the gentle drops  
To wash the age-old soot  
To drive out the darkness,  
To cleanse the soul  
To be blessed with peace.

*(2002)*

## **An·chin' A·sal**

Be-en na·tok su·srangani  
An·chi gnang chi,  
Galnabe indinari.  
Rubo me·su bibalna  
An·chide a·salba.

A·sal ong·bebejok,  
Aman' a·song chiga.  
A·song a·mitimjok,  
Chiga gitchakchippiljok,  
An·chichi chadambeni  
Dos gri janggirangni.  
Jawani gamchi  
Pil·jok marangari.  
Ma·sigija intokari  
Ong·jok chudoani.

Chasongna nikuake  
Kattaari, gri kamde.  
Bon·angengjok matgrikrangde  
A·song chel·chaknagiparangde.  
Rasong mikkim mukkuarangde  
A·ningo gitchujokke.

An·chide a·sal darangba jeja,  
Dugapilode a·salba namja.  
An·chin' a·sala mangkimapila,  
Ja·pang ja·dilkon cha·sotpangpila.

Saton an·chin' bitchri,  
Ja·diltaia apsanoni,  
Janggina ka·pakgijani.  
Bitchri namjaode, a·sal apsanaiode,  
Ka·dongani gri, A·chik jatnade.

(2001)

## **Manure of Blood**

Meat-fish wash  
Steeped in blood,  
Throw it not.  
Blood is manure  
For veg and flower.

The mother earth  
Is now dark rich.  
Fertile is the land,  
The watershed scarlet,  
With the blood of youth,  
Of lives innocent.  
Life defiled and tainted  
With others' wealth.  
The ignorant term it  
Progress at its height.

We all stand and stare  
All words, no action.  
Gone are the warriors,  
Protectors of the land.  
Our glory, our crowns  
Lie dead and buried.  
Blood fertilizes, true:  
But excess breeds evil.  
It wipes out existence  
Gnaws at its roots.

From the same blood-seeds,  
The same roots sprout,  
Contempt for life precious.  
Unchanged manure, seeds of evil  
Spell doom for our people.

*(2001)*

## **Pattia Isolde**

Janggi tangania  
Bakkandikbea;  
Sanabade indiba  
Ja-jrimachi toa.  
Mikchin gron goe  
Kusin' bitchil sate,  
Re-a mande.

Saobarang chua  
Gipinranga ona;  
Mitamrang cha-a,  
Bangkide akala.  
Maina indaka?  
Pattia dedaama  
Jakkala changjasama!

Ka-saa pattia  
Isolde apsan;  
Dedaa dingtanga  
Manden' changgijasa.

(1994)

## **The Lord Blesses**

Life is  
Fleeting.  
For some,  
Plodding.  
Planting tear-grains  
Sowing joy-seeds  
Walks the man.

Some are elevated  
Others eat dust;  
Some are rich  
While others starve.  
Why is this?  
Unequal blessing,  
Or inapt handling!

The Lord blesses  
With the same measure;  
Inequality comes  
From man's ignorance.

(1994)

## **Duk Mikchin' Bil**

Kalimani sokosa  
Mandeko chamesaa,  
Bilraka sikpakosa  
Mikselmanchaa.

Dukni re-baosa,  
Kastitani bata;  
Chel·ana olgrokgipakoba  
Stitgrikatpila.

Kalimanisa  
Nom·bokenggipa janggiko  
Ka·sae okamrikpila  
Dongkan mes jako.

Duk mikchisa  
Bebera·an' olgrokako,  
Ka·sine salpila  
Ong·na ramatango.

Mande mikasalna,  
Nanga duk mikchiko  
Ong·na chegipa  
Ariko badeo.

(1993)

# **The Power of Tragedy**

Tragedy  
Shakes a man awake;  
Jolts him  
To full wakefulness.

Tragedy  
Strengthens ties;  
Forges bonds  
Slackened by distance.

Tragedy  
Revives a faint soul;  
Calling it softly  
Back to the fold.

Tragedy  
Gently steadies  
The tottering faith  
In its slippery track.

Tragedy  
Makes a man wiser;  
An outright winner  
On crossing the line.

(1993)

## Songregipa

Askin' bakrimao  
Songreango  
Taria so-opa bicham  
Noksiko an-tangna.  
An-tang a-gilsako  
Songregipaskan bijatchio  
Indiba saksan sikdikdikao.

Sin-karin' ka-sinjrim balwa  
Chipata kelki do-ga  
Beben dongtoani be-enna  
Nikjaata askiko indiba.  
Ra-gala kusuniko  
Done golmal bijatchio  
Bak ong-paate angko.

Done skotangko  
Chikokjrim silkamo  
Ka-sinatna wal-chaa mikkingko  
Darang tusidimuo.  
Dokdata do-ga  
Angko saknaatna.  
Indiba maina?

Sambengo ma-sia  
Sakgipin songregipa  
Tikata ding-bom an-chiko  
Minggija gandingko.  
Sandia an-bigilona  
An-chi bidilskaona  
Angko jajaate dikdiksana.



An-dingani, an-chi janggini  
Be-en gisik wachaani  
Biltangko ma-sie  
Katjripa ka-sine;  
An-chi chong-karamona  
Tusidimutaina  
Chamesataikujana.

Ia a-gilsak  
Aro mande jat  
Dokpenga ang' jakgitelaniko  
On-ja jakkalna be-en gisiktangko.  
Indioba ka-oksia jakgitelanina;  
Jakgitelaniko man-aba man-a  
Dokpengaonikon anga.

(1977)

## **The Tripper**

In the company of stars  
A soft corner make I  
During the trip  
For self.  
In a World of my own  
In the midst of trippers  
Yet far removed from them.

The cold winter winds  
Force to close the openings.  
For the body, it's a comfort  
But the stars are shut out;  
Eclipsing the inner bliss,  
Making me a part  
Of the raucous company.

I lay my head  
Against the cool window bar  
To relieve my feverish forehead,  
While others slumber.  
The window bangs hard  
To torture me.  
But why?

Then I become aware  
Of another tripper  
Warmth seeping  
Ignoring the clothes  
Through the skin  
Right to the blood stream  
Confusing me for a while.

The blood, the warmth  
Aware of its own power,  
Its mischievous vitality,  
Tamely withdraws  
To its original nook  
To remain dormant  
Till roused again.

This world, this universe,  
And mankind  
Restrict my freedom  
Blunting my body and mind.  
But freedom I crave,  
Freedom I receive  
From restriction.

(1977)

## Ang' Kelkisamo

Kelkisamo asongoa,  
Rokomari nikanirangsa  
Aala ang' mikronrangna.  
Jakgital bolbijakrang  
Balwana salama,  
Urangming mopaa  
A-medikko a-mitim changiparang.

Gitchak gitchakmrang golapranga  
Jakjipa angko mikkao mesapana.  
Mikka bitchirang  
Angko gisik ra-ata,  
Kal-paachim anga u'rang jatchio  
Mikkango tottakdape  
Kni pingruako ma-ekate.

Tokbrina lilyba angko ra-bia  
Un' me-mang so-dikarangko gimaatna  
Uming janggisan ong-china.  
Indiba maramgimin grengrang  
Ra-chakjawa dingtanganirang.  
Nambata niaton de-doe pordako  
Tokbrina kaprangrangko.

Mikoenggipa do-orang  
Duk suk gri ring-kamaigiparang,  
Kelkisamo bilwenwena  
Ra-bie angko ring-pachina.  
Indiba galchipgimin ang' sula  
Gando makkal amja kolna  
Jotton ka-beoba.

Noknappgimin strawberry  
Namnikbegipa, ang' demechikni  
Kimala angko un' biterangchi.  
Indiba niaia, sengaia anga  
Angdeni ka-sariri akaona,  
Ra-bae on-aona  
Kelkisam asongchakramona.

Ka-sirok majoanirang  
Ku-nama ra-bianirang  
Dongalon nambata uarang.  
Kelkisamko watange  
Bibalko dangtapeode, ring-ako ra-bieode,  
Kninggen ang' jumangrang  
One-gen koltogija biginchirang.

(2002)

## **My Window-Seat**

As I take my window seat  
A parade of pictures  
Becomes a visual feast.  
The tender leaves  
Greet me in the wind  
With them in rhythm  
The plants in pots earthen.

The red, pink roses  
Beckon me to join their rain-waltz.  
The raindrops  
Remind me that  
Once I used to frolic in their midst,  
The drops pattering on my face  
Parting my unruly hair.

Challenges the tiger lily  
To erase the spots in it and me  
And to become one with it.  
But the creaking bones  
Tolerate not the changes.  
Best to lift the curtain  
And watch the spotted petals.

The trilling birds  
That sing in joy forever  
Twitter near my window,  
Daring me to sing along.  
But the chords left long idle  
Fail to take up the gauntlet  
However much I try.

The tamed strawberry  
The pet plant of my daughter  
Tempts me with its berries.  
I prefer to watch, to wait,  
For my daughter to pluck them with love  
And deliver them at my seat  
Near the window.

The sweet temptings  
The adorable challenges  
Are best left untouched.  
I know, if I leave my window seat  
Touch the flowers, dare the birds,  
My dreams will be broken  
Into unpickable smithereens.

(2002)

## Salgi Chil-engsa

Chi-indik noksik  
Saksantangtang  
Ka-srisri git  
Chikokjrim balwa.  
Ia pilak pekbrine  
On-a mandena  
Salgi chil-engsa.

Jripjrangani  
Ku-gri olakkiani  
Agana bang-e  
Ka-tongo nangate.  
Dangtapgimin ka-tongrang  
Nika grikgang nitoani  
Ong-siani janggilchi.

Nitoani a-rikgala  
Ong-siani, mitchigni,  
Duk mikchi ka-beani;  
Ra-baskaa kusi katchaani.  
Indake on-a bi-gijan  
Chonbea chil-engko  
A-sakni salgiko.

Jakgitel do-buring  
Sako bilwenwena;  
Ka-sinjrjim balwako  
Done grang kokkimao.  
Un ku-watgija ring-a  
Senga manggipin' gitna  
Salgi chil-engsako ong-atna.



Bi-sa bakgitchak  
Jakgitel jajrengaoni  
Kal-a chanchia gri  
Dukrang a-sakni.  
Un' rongtala ka-dingsmita  
Katta aganmejeka,  
Ong-a salgi chil-engsa.

Jajumang jatenga  
A-sakko pingopa  
Rupan' rongchi;  
Walko didia  
Ga-chokchimpilna seng-aona,  
Sonan' rongchi gapatna  
Salgi chil-engsa.

An-seng katchana  
Cha-tote rim-roke nina  
Salgi chil-engko,  
Mande, Kimbri,  
Isolni ong-ataoni  
Nanga rugalna  
Rangkare kraa.

(2002)

## **A Slice of Heaven**

A quiet corner  
None to share,  
Soulful music  
A breath of fresh air.  
The heady mixture  
Offers man  
A slice of heaven.

The deep silence  
The still obeisance  
Speaks much  
Touches hearts.  
Touched hearts  
See unsullied beauty  
Behind grime and ugliness.

Beauty chases away  
Things grimy and ugly  
And also blues;  
Brings joy and laughter.  
Thus offers unbidden  
A small bite  
Of earthly heaven.

A bird unfettered  
Twirling above,  
The soft breeze  
Beneath its wings.  
Its muted trill  
Waits for another  
To create a piece of heaven.

A little child  
Free from cares  
Plays unconcerned  
To earthly woes.  
Its beatific smile  
Its lispy talk  
Is a piece of heaven.

The dreamy moonlight  
Suffuses the earth  
With argent hues;  
Urging the night  
To steal back to light  
And fill with golden rays  
The slice of heaven.

Life to enjoy  
To taste and feel  
The slice of heaven  
Man, the Pinnacle  
Of God's creation  
Needs for libation  
A fitting receptacle.

(2002)

## **Ripengrangna Salam**

Saksa me-chik bi-sa  
Nikdalatgipa jako,  
Am-a jo-ong kongtokko  
Ringsolgitaloniko  
Birthday Cardo.

Tarigimin jakchi  
Card sakgipinoni  
Sokbana gualja  
Ka-saan gape  
Salsa ja-manchake.

Gipin ripeng angni,  
Bilsil kolatchini  
Jakgitchaja kamtangchi.  
Un' salamanirang  
Ra-baa salgi bangbang.

Gipin ripeng dongoba,  
Ia ripeng sakgittam  
Man-a angni nango,  
Dukni sukni salo  
Cha ringrimao.

Rim·ramon andalao  
Rim·mana umang jakko.  
Saknae ma·amo  
Knaa ang' sambao  
Ka·dimean' ku·rangko.

Brie an·chi dim·dema.  
Indiba jo-ong kongtoka,  
Jaktang card taria,  
Balwagita salama,  
An·saoata da·oba.

Salam, ripengrang angni:  
An·sengani, katchaani  
Ong·china Gitelni pattiani,  
Ma·kae stitanina,  
Ka·dongao chiripanina.

(2002)

## **Tribute to Friends**

A little girl  
With a hand-glass  
Looks for a lady-bird  
From a tender leaf,  
On a birthday card.

Hand-crafted card  
From a second friend  
Never fails to arrive  
With much affection,  
Though a day late.

Another friend  
Of three decades,  
Busy as ever,  
Sends her wishes  
Through air-waves.

Other friends are there  
But dear Eselar,  
I get you when I need,  
In joy or in sorrow  
Over a cuppa.

I grope in darkness  
And chance to feel your hands.  
I cry out in pain,  
Hear your soothing voice  
Close by.

Age dims the thrills.  
Yet the lady-bird,  
The hand-crafted card,  
Through-the-air wishes  
Still uplift my soul.

Greetings, dear friends,  
Health and Happiness,  
Lord's choicest blessings,  
For forging the ties  
On the anvil of trust.

(2002)

## **Simteka Gri Gitrang**

Ring-rongachim anga,  
Simteka gri gitrang,  
Sa-gren ka-dingani,  
Gun similani.

Ma-an ka-saani,  
Changdule jakrangchi,  
Ong-ata gitko  
Ka-srokan' sulko.

Manchoka balsaba  
Rikrak ripamchiba,  
Man-a ra-angna  
Miten a-songona.

Grikjang mikka  
Ku-aganao ja-napa;  
Do-pinchep mangsaba  
Angko an-saoata.

Tusiachim anga  
Gri simteka,  
Gapata jumangchi  
Pindape teng-achi.

Ka-donga gipino,  
Ma-sija tol-ako,  
Namgija a-gilsak  
Ka-donga dondapjok.

Cha-ujok jumangko  
Pringprang re-bao,  
Pa-jok de-mesana,  
Be-jok ang' tuaba.

Ma-an ku-rang tipatjok,  
Bi-sa gitok aksotjok,  
Ra-srojok kamko,  
Norok andalaoniko.

\\ Bibal aro biteko  
\\ Ga-kningjok gisikko.  
Janggiko ong-siate,  
Tangako bakchotate.

Mangkimaatsrangjok,  
Chel-e galonatjok,  
Manden' ka-dingsmitako  
Pap a-kuango.

Anga ring-kuenga,  
Gipin gitko da-oba;  
Chotgimin buduoniko  
Ra-jok gitni sulko.

Ring-a do-ni gimin  
Grang gruategimin;  
Ong-ate mikchi  
Rugimin nokdangchi.

Be-gimin ka-tongrang  
On-a uni sulrang;  
Ra-srojok kattako  
Jawan' dukoniko.

Nanggen ring-taina,  
Mikchiko u-sitna;  
Sampilna matako,  
Ra-galna kenako.

On-bo kusun a-sakko,  
Rongtalatmangiminko,  
An-saoatbo ring-na angko,  
Simteka gri gitrangko.

(1990)

## Songs of Innocence

I used to sing  
The songs of innocence,  
Of angelic smiles  
Of pure fragrance.

A mother's love  
Enclosed in arms soothing  
Set the music  
A tune all refreshing.

A single bud  
Aglow with morning dew  
Could transport me  
To fairy lands anew.

The crystal raindrops  
Sneaked into my expression,  
A tiny bird  
Could fill me with inspiration.

I used to sleep  
The sleep of innocence  
Filled with dreams  
Wrapped in radiance.

Faith in others  
Unsuspecting guiles,  
With the harsh world  
Cushioned in smiles.

But the dreams all stolen  
At Aurora's peep,  
As she dares to awaken  
From my peaceful sleep.



A mother's voice gagged  
A babe's breath stifled,  
With deeds borrowed  
From the nether world.

Buds and sentiments  
Trampled to obscurity,  
Besmirching one's life  
In all its brevity.

Wiped out for ever  
The innocent smile,  
Thrown headlong  
Into depths abysmal.

I still sing  
But of other things;  
The tune all awry  
Plucked from broken strings.

I sing of birds  
With twisted wings,  
Touched by tears  
Of homes in ruins.

The moans of broken hearts  
Do lend the tune,  
Words I borrow  
From someone's misfortune.

But now I've to sing  
To dry the tears;  
To heal the wounds,  
To remove the fears.

Give me a world of cheer,  
Purged of all pretence,  
Inspire me to sing again  
The songs of innocence.

(1990)

# Poedorangna On·tiprak Talatani

(A Word on each Poem)

## Poedorang (Poems)

1. Anga Bebera-a: Re·ronggimal ramako wate,  
re·ronggijana rike niode, mande  
maikode dakna man·ja.

I Believe: What a man is capable of achieving  
if only he is willing to strike out for  
the unknown.

2. Ang' Ripengni Katta: Ramrambatsranggipa bosturango  
Isol an·tangko mesoka.

The Story of My Friend: God manifests Himself in the  
simplest of things.

3. Gitelni Boja: Gunrangni gimaangania Gitelo  
bojako gata.

The Lord's Burden: Loss of Values puts the burden on  
the Lord.

4. Challang: Changa·sapani a·gilsakni  
Challanga Gisik·A·ning bitani  
Challangba ong·na man·aia.

The Hero: The Hero in the world of creative  
arts can be a Hero in the world of  
Science too.

5. Gunni Gopram: Da·alni a·gilsako gunrang  
gimaangtokengjok.

The Burial Ground for:  
Values Loss of values in the present day  
world.

6. Aman' Janggi Silchi: Amani janggi tanganio mingsa  
obosta ong·chongmotani.

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>My Mother's Soul:</b>     | <b>Autobiographical, an incident in my mother's life.</b>   |
| <b>7. Manden' Bichal:</b>    | <b>Niamo rakchakaigipa toromo ka-gram ka-galani.</b>  |
| <b>The Court of Man:</b>     | <b>Despair at the institutionalised religion.</b>   |
| <b>8. Sing-ani:</b>          | <b>Ma-gitcham-pagitchamrangni bebera-ani aro ning-tue Uianiko chasong gitalni bebera-ani aro uianiming donchape nia.</b>  |
| <b>The Query:</b>            | <b>Truth as manifest in the beliefs/traditions of our forefathers juxtaposed against those of the present day world.</b>  |
| <b>9. Damsan:</b>            | <b>Meghalayani mongsongbatgipa jatgnini melijabatmiting somoeo sea. Jatsani duk-kusini obostarang jatsagipao nangetelaia.</b>   |
| <b>Together:</b>             | <b>Written during the height of tension between the two major tribes of Meghalaya: how the fortunes and the fates of the two tribes are inextricably intertwined.</b> |
| <b>10. Miksilchi:</b>        | <b>Sakgipinrangni nanganirangna aro saknaanirangna mandeni mikgriani.</b>   |
| <b>A Pair of Spectacles:</b> | <b>Man's blindness to the needs and sufferings of others.</b>   |
| <b>11. Balkol:</b>           | <b>A-chik ma-gitcham pagitc-hamrangoba gisik a-ning bitani gisik ning-tuachim.</b>  |

- The Abode of Wind-God: Emphasis on the nascent scientific knowledge of the A·chik fore-fathers.
12. Rong Gri Mande: So·opa rong grigipa, ka·tong rakgipa mande, Gitelko ra·chakna rangkaretangko kragipa ong·at·chengna nanga.
- The Man With No: Colours A man not given to the soft colours, not given to the beauties of life, first needs to make himself a fitting receptacle for God.
13. An·chin' A·sal: Da·ororo mandeni janggiko dam chate ra·gijani.
- The Manure of Blood: Cheapening of life in today's World.
14. Pattia Isolde: Isolni pattianiko jakkalna changjae mande an·tangna duk·skimaniko ra·baa.
- The Lord Blesses : Man's incompetence in appropriating God's blessings boomerangs on his life.
15. Duk Mikchin' Bil: Janggi tanganio duk mikchiko cha·totosa mande be·eno gisiko bilakbata.
- The Power of Tragedy : Constructive effect of tragedy on man's life.
16. Songregipa: Englisho seon, songregipa aro dakmajogipa ruragipako man·dime "Tripper" katta bichongko on·achim; pe·skaora orto man·chapdimgipa kattako man·jajok. Indake "Songregipa"

inesan pe-aijok. Mandeni gisik  
bilakaniko salantini ruraanirango  
toe niani.

The Tripper:

“The Tripper” stands for the  
traveller as well as the tempter.

Man’s will power is measured  
against everyday temptations.

17. Ang’ Kelkisamo:

Angni seram biapni a-palo  
nikmanchagiparangkong janapa.

Ong-chongmotani aro chan-  
chiaosan dongaigiparangko  
tosusaani.

My Window Seat:

The scene described exists just  
outside my window seat. It’s Reality  
versus Dream World.

18. Salgi Chil-engsa:

A-sakni salgiara maironga; a-sakni  
salgiko aro salgi manchako mande  
maidake cha-totna man-gen.

A Slice of Heaven:

What constitutes the earthly  
heaven; what man has to do for a  
taste of earthly heaven and heaven.

19. Ripengrangna Salam:

Angni ripengrangko mittelpilani.

Tribute to Friends:

Gratitude to friends who were there  
when I needed them.

20. Simteka Gri Gitrang :

Sontolani, bamani gimaanina  
kalima, indiba mikkangchina  
ka-dongsoaniko watja.

Songs of Innocence:

Lament at the loss of power to  
create the songs of innocence;  
optimism for its retrieval and a  
better future.





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